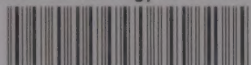


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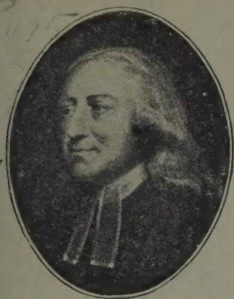
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... Had a Genius for Godliness."
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The Scriptural Christian 19002

"Will those who have read the life of John Wesley please raise their hands?"

The request was made of a congregation of about 200 persons.

One hand was raised!

A questionnaire was sent out later—this being a day of questionnaires—and from tests made by Methodist pastors in several States it was found that about one Methodist in a hundred has read Wesley's life.

What does this mean? That John Wesley, the founder of Methodism—and, according to a historian, "the most influential mind of the eighteenth century; the man who will have produced the greatest effects, centuries or millenniums hence, if the present race of men should continue so long," is unknown to Methodists!

On the assumption that, "to know something about Wesley is better than to know nothing about him," this brochure has been prepared for those who profess to be followers of Wesley, but confess that they have never read his life. It is hoped that the reading of this booklet may lead many to study the life of this great man.

Many volumes have been written on the life and work of the founder of Methodism, but no Methodist should fail to read, "The Heart of John Wesley's Journal," and Fitchett's "Wesley and His Century." While consulting several other books in the preparation of this pamphlet, the writer has drawn freely from the sources named above.

Let us note some important dates in the life of Wesley; Born at Epworth, England, June 17,

1703; sent to Charter-House school at 11 years of age; entered Oxford University at 17; ordained at 25; went to Georgia, as a missionary to the Indians, 1735; returned to England, 1738; received the witness of the Spirit, May 24, 1738; died March 2, 1791. His life covered almost the whole of the eighteenth century.

He was a graduate of Oxford University, and one of the best educated men of his day. When 23 years of age, he was elected a "Fellow of Lincoln College," one of the highest scholastic honors of that day. It has been said that "Methodism was born in a University." From the beginning, our Church has emphasized the importance of Christian education. "Methodism built a school before it built a church. Kingswood school was built before any Methodist chapel was erected."

Weslev was descended from the best English stock. His father, grand-father and great-grand-father were clergymen. His mother, Susannah Wesley, a daughter of Dr. Annesley, a clergyman, was a woman of rare accomplishments. Her deep piety, and her unusual gifts for training children in the religious life, have given her the name of "the mother of Methodism."

With such ancestors, no wonder John Wesley was a man of a very strong religious nature. When 8 years of age, his father admitted him to the Communion table. But some will be shocked to hear him say that he was not converted until May 24, 1738, when he was 35 years old, and had been a preacher for thirteen years. How could such a thing be? He tells us how strictly he attended to every religious duty. He was willing, as he said, "to give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned." He was willing to leave his native land and go to America to preach to the Indians, and for the love of Christ, to suffer all the hardships of a long ocean voyage, and privations and persecutions in the New World, and yet he was

without that peace which Christ has procured for all through His atonement.

On his voyage from America to England he recorded in his Journal: "I went to America to convert the Indians, but O! who shall convert me? who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of mischief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say, 'To die is gain!'"
"Whoever sees me, sees I would be a Christian. Therefore 'are my ways not like other men's ways.' Therefore I have been, I am, I am content to be, 'a by-word, a proverb of reproach.'"

"All my works," he says, "all my righteousness, my prayers, need an atonement for themselves, so that my mouth is stopped. I have nothing to plead. God is holy; I am unholy. God is a consuming fire; I am altogether a sinner, meet to be consumed."

But God never allows one to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" in vain. As he sent Ananias to instruct Saul, of Tarsus, in the way of life, so He sent Peter Bohler, a devout Moravian, to lead Wesley unto full assurance of faith. By conversing with Bohler, he was prepared for the great step.

"I Felt My Heart Strangely Warmed"

Wednesday, May 24, 1738, was a memorable day for Wesley. He was in London, and his Journal gives a full account of how he spent the day. "I think it was about five this morning that I opened my Testament on these words: 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature.' Just as I went out, I opened it again on these words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'Out of the deep have I called unto

Thee, O Lord,' etc. In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now felt in my heart."

How was it possible for one to strive so earnestly to be a Christian for many years and fail? It was because he failed to realize that "salvation is through Christ's atonement alone, and not through our own works; that its sole condition is faith; and that it is attested to the spiritual consciousness by the Holy Spirit. These truths today are platitudes; to Wesley they were, at this stage of his life, discoveries."

His Fatal Mistake

"Wesley's mistake was, of course fatal," says Fitchett. "It is perfectly clear that through all the stages of his experience up to this point self, in many disguises, had taken the place of Christ. Wesley always put the emphasis on him-self, on his own motives, acts, self-denials, prayers, aspirations, and not on his Saviour. And woe to the soul that shifts the centre of its faith in this fashion and finds that centre, not in the redeeming offices, the great and radiant figure of the living Christ, but in the imperfect and broken fragment of its own acts and merits."

What a change came over Wesley! Lecky, the historian, says it "forms an epoch in English history." It is certainly true that Methodism was born on the day that Wesley received

the witness of the Spirit. What this epoch in Wesley's life meant to him and his career is admirably portrayed by Fitchett:

"But the change in Wesley was not merely subjective. It took concrete form in his life. It registered itself in history How was it that he, who in 1727 could not move a village, after 1739 could shake three kingdoms? The explanation certainly does not lie in any personal gifts of body or brain Wesley possessed. These were exactly the same at both stages of his career. Wesley, at Wroot, was 25 years of age. He had then the scholar's brain, the zealot's fire, the orator's tongue; and he failed—failed consciously and completely. 'I preached much,' is his own record, 'but saw no fruits of my labor.' Wesley, again, in Savannah, was 32 years of age. At no stage of his life did he show a higher passion of zeal, or more methodical or resolute industry; a self-sacrifice so nearly heroic in temper. And yet he failed! But something came into his life by the gate of his conversion, something he never lost, something which transfigured his career. It was a strange gift of power—power that used Wesley's natural gifts—his tough body, his keen intellect, his resolute will—as instruments, but which was more than these. Who looks on Wesley's life as a whole, and sees on one side of a particular date doubt, weakness, and defeat; and on the other side certainty, gladness and matchless power, cannot doubt that the secret of Wesley's career lies in the spiritual realm."

Those are wonderfully significant words. We should pause here and learn a lesson. Are there not many in the Church today whose lives are characterized by "doubt, weakness and defeat," instead of "certainty, gladness and power?" Why? The study of Wesley's life may give us the answer.

"Hungering and Thirsting After Righteousness"

Let no one imagine that Wesley had low ideals of the Christian life before he received the witness of the Spirit. When 23 years of age, he said: "I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words, and actions—being thoroughly convinced there was no medium; but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself—that is in effect, to the devil."

Later he published a treatise on Christian Perfection and gave it the title, "A plain account of Christian Perfection as believed and taught by the Rev. John Wesley from the year 1725 to the year 1777." Thus it will be seen that the doctrine of Christian Perfection, which he says implied "the loving God with all our heart and mind, and soul," was believed and taught by him from the time he was 23 years old.

When Matthew Arnold said Wesley had a "genius for godliness," he meant, no doubt, that the most remarkable thing about this unique man was his passion for holiness. If you would learn something of the meaning of consecration, hear his prayer: "Lo, I come, if this soul and body may be useful to anything, to do Thy will, O God. If it please Thee to use the power Thou hast over dust and ashes, here they are to suffer Thy good pleasure. If Thou pleasest to visit, either with pain or dishonor, I will humble myself under it, and through Thy grace be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Hereafter no man can take away anything from me, no life, no honor, no estate; since I am ready to lay them down as soon as I perceive Thou requirest them at my hands."

"I wish to be, in every point, great and small a scriptural, rational Christian," he says. In this brief space we cannot do better than study Wesley as a "Scriptural Christian." Let us note a few characteristics of his Christian life.

A CHEERFUL CHRISTIAN

A devout and happy Christian man was once a guest at a hotel where he was associated with a worldly-minded man for sometime. The ungodly man was so impressed with the winning personality of the Christian man that he blurted out one day: "Look here, you've got something I haven't, and I want to know what it is."

Wesley must have impressed those who met him in the same way. Alexander Knox knew him intimately and bore this testimony:

"His countenance as well as his conversation expressed an habitual gaiety of heart, which nothing but conscious innocence and virtue could have bestowed. He was in truth the most perfect specimen of moral happiness I ever saw, and my acquaintance with him has done more to teach me what a heaven upon earth is implied in the maturity of Christian piety than all I have elsewhere seen or heard or read, except in the sacred volume."

He used to say that "sour godliness is the devil's religion." "You seem to apprehend," he says, "that I believe religion to be inconsistent with cheerfulness and with a social, friendly temper. So far from it that I am convinced, as true religion cannot be without cheerfulness, so steady cheerfulness cannot be without true religion. I am equally convinced that religion has nothing sour, austere, unsociable, unfriendly; but, on the contrary, it implies the most winning sweetness, the most amiable softness, and gentleness. Are you for having as much cheerfulness as you can? So am I. Do you endeavor to keep alive your taste for all the truly innocent pleasures of life? So do I. Do you refuse no pleasure but what is a hindrance to some greater good or has a tendency to some evil? It is my very rule."

One of his preachers even complained that Wesley tempted him to levity by his witty proverbs.

SERENITY AND SELF-CONTROL

One of the very first things to impress you in studying the life of Wesley is his wonderful serenity and self-control. Now we all know that self-control in a high degree is a rare virtue, and it would seem that it has always been so, for many centuries ago the wise man wrote: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." The number of those who can lead armies and take cities is perhaps greater than those who have supreme control over self. But how was it with the founder of Methodism. He was burdened with the care of the churches, criticised, abused, misrepresented, mobbed, dogged by personal enemies and ecclesiastical enemies, beset with the most trying domestic troubles, and yet through it all he maintained a spirit of serenity and self-control that is most admirable. We hear him say: "I feel and grieve: but, by the grace of God, I fret at nothing. I dare no more *fret* than curse or swear." He was no stoic, he was no wooden man,—*"I feel and grieve,"* he says, and we know he was a man of the most refined feelings.

During a season of persecutions by his enemies, his friends were deeply agitated, but Wesley was the coolest of them all. He says: "Every week I am bespattered in the public papers. Many are in tears on the occasion; many terribly frightened, and crying out, 'O, what will the end be?' 'What will it be? Why glory to God in the highest, and peace and goodwill among men.'" The persecutions of the High Churchmen did not alarm him.

Here is an illustration of the spirit in which he did his work amidst privations unknown to the preachers of today: "In my present journey I am content with whatever entertainment I meet with, and my companions are always in good humor. This must be the spirit of all who take journeys with me. If a dinner ill-

dressed, a hard bed, a poor room, a shower of rain, or a dirty road will put them out of humor, it lays a burden upon me greater than all the rest put together. By the grace of God I will never fret; I repine at nothing; I am discontented with nothing. And to have persons at my ear fretting and murmuring at everything, is like tearing the flesh off my bones. I see God sitting upon His throne and ruling all things well."

Adam Clarke says Wesley surpassed even Fletcher in tranquillity of spirit, when one considers what he had to undergo. He used to say that ten thousand cares were no more weight to his mind than ten thousand hairs to his head. Only once or twice does he record some depression of spirit, which was of very short duration, and was cured by taking a little more work "into a life already packed and crowded with work."

His Calmness in Facing a Mob

His self-control never shows to better advantage than when facing an angry mob. His life was saved more than once, perhaps, by his supreme self-possession. Nor can it be said that he was unaware of the peril which often confronted him on such occasions. An infuriated mob attacked him and his helpers at Falmouth, and, "to all appearances," he says, "our lives were not worth an hour's purchase." Wesley was urged to hide himself in the house which the mob attacked, but he refused to do so. The door was broken in and—but let him tell it: "Away went all the hinges at once, and the door fell back into the room. I stepped forward at once into the midst of them, and said, 'Here I am. Which of you has anything to say to me? To which of you have I done any wrong? To you? Or you? Or you?' I continued speaking till I came bareheaded as I was (for I purposely left my hat that they might all see

my face), into the middle of the street, and then raising my voice, said 'Neighbors, countrymen! Do you desire to hear me speak?' They cried vehemently, 'Yes, yes, he shall speak. He shall. Nobody shall hinder him,' " etc.

On another occasion an angry mob attacked him with murderous intent, some raising clubs and crying, "Knock his brains out! Down with him! Kill him at once!" But he escaped with little injury, "having lost," as he said, "only one flap of my waistcoat and a little skin from one of my hands."

It was a close call, and we hardly know which amazes us more, his escape from death, or his serenity and self-possession. He says: "From the beginning to the end, I found the same presence of mind as if I had been sitting in my own study. But I took no thought for one moment before another; only once it came into my mind, that if they should throw me into the river, it would spoil the papers that were in my pocket. For myself, I did not doubt but that I should swim across, having but a thin coat, and a light pair of boots."

When a rude low-bred fellow ran against him, and tried to throw him down, saying in an impudent manner, "I never turn out for fools," Wesley, stepping aside, said, "I always do,"—and the fool passed on.

Impatience of criticism is a fault all too common. A great many people cannot bear even to be told of their faults that they might mend them. But no one bore criticism more kindly than Wesley. Here is his reply to a carping, fault-finding man. We quote only a sentence or two: "You conclude with praying that God would remove pride and malice from among us. Of pride I have too much; of malice, I have none. However, the prayer is good, and I thank you for it."

The basest slanders were heaped upon him. He was called "a dealer in stolen wares," "a libeler,"

"as unprincipled as a rook," "that old fox," etc., by his antagonists. At this time he was an old man of seventy-four, and his traducers were young men who were supposed to be employed as he was, in building up the kingdom of God. But, as usual, he controlled his temper and replied in a manner becoming a Christian. "Where?" he asks, "have I, in one single sentence, returned them railing for railing? I have not so learned Christ. I dare not rail, either at them or you. I return not cursing, but blessing. That the God of love may bless them and you is the prayer of your injured, yet still affectionate brother, John Wesley."

When some one complained because a young preacher found fault with an older preacher, Wesley said: "I will thank the youngest man among you to tell me of any fault you see, or believe you see, in me; in so doing, I shall consider you my best friend."

The Secret of Serenity and Self-Control

What is the secret of such wonderful serenity and self-possession? Adam Clarke gives it: "It was his deep intimacy with God." He felt God near at all times,—closer than breathing. After a narrow escape from a mob, he says, "I never saw such a chain of providences before; so many convincing proofs that the hand of God is on every person and thing, overruling all as it seemeth Him good."

A converted captain of a rabble bore the same testimony. Charles Wesley received him on trial into the Methodist Society, and asked the question: "What think you of my brother?" "Think of him?" was the answer, "That he is a mon of God; and God was on his side, when so mony of us could not kill one mon."

After a miraculous escape from death Wesley wrote the hymn containing the lines:

"Angels our servants are,
And keep us in our ways;
And in their watchful hands they bear
The sacred sons of grace."

Serenity and self-control, rare and coveted graces,—how attained? By "a deep intimacy with God." Let us pause and learn a lesson.



THE SINGLE EYE

We judge one morally by his motives. The inmost purposes and intents of the heart determine one's real character in the sight of God who "looketh upon the heart." "If thine eye be single," the Master said, "thy whole body shall be full of light."

Macaulay has paid a high tribute to Wesley's singleness of aim: "A man whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have made him eminent in literature, whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu, and who, whatever his errors may have been, devoted all his powers in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered as the highest good of his species."

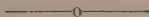
That was a fair estimate of the man if Wesley knew his own heart, for he himself says: "I have one point in view—to promote, as far as I am able, vital, practical religion, and by the grace of God to beget, preserve and increase the life of God in the souls of men."

One of his famous sayings is: "I seek two things in this world; truth and love. Whoever assists me in this search is a friend indeed." But it was not enough to make high professions and set high ideals before him, he wanted the fruits of his life to prove his sincerity. "I hope my life, rather than my tongue, says: 'I desire only to spend and be spent in the work.'"

But let no one think that he succeeded in convincing the world that he always acted from

pure motives. His motives were questioned, his good name was slandered, but the very spirit in which he replied, or held his peace, proved that he was upright in all his intentions. Here is his reply to some of the unjust criticisms: "With regard to myself, you do well to warn me against popularity, a thirst of power and of applause; against envy producing a seeming contempt for the convenience of grandeur of this life; against an affected humility; against sparing from myself to give to others, from no other motive than ostentation. I am not conscious to myself that this is the case. However, the warning is always friendly, and it is always seasonable, considering how deceitful my heart is and how many enemies that surround me."

He enjoined upon others this singleness of aim which he himself practiced: "Dare any of you, in choosing your calling or situation, eye the things on earth rather than the things above? In choosing a profession, or a companion of life for your child, do you look at earth or heaven? And can you deliberately prefer, either for yourself or your offspring, a child of the devil with money, to a child of God without it? Repent of your vile earthly-mindedness. Let your eye be single, that your whole body may be full of light."



FIDELITY TO DUTY

One of the essential marks of a Christian is "faithfulness," or fidelity to duty. Paul mentions it as one of the fruits of the Spirit. Let us see how Wesley's life stands this test.

One of his famous sayings was: "Consult duty, not events; we have nothing to do but to mind our duty." And he was ever consulting duty, regardless of criticism, reproach or persecution. When, as an act of courtesy, he consulted Bishop Butler before preaching at a certain place, the Bishop replied very sharply: "Well, sir,

since you ask my advice, I will give it freely. You have no business here; you are not commissioned to preach in this diocese. Therefore I advise you to go hence." Wesley replied, "My lord, my business on earth is to do what good I can. Wherever, therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay, so long as I think so. At present I think I can do most good here; therefore here I stay." Writing to his brother Charles concerning this incident, he says: "My answer to them which trouble me is this: God commands me to do good unto all men; to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man commands me not to do this in another's parish; that is, in effect, not to do it at all. If it be just to obey men rather than God, judge ye. But what if a Bishop forbids it? God being my helper, I will obey Him still; and if I suffer for it, His will be done."

When so much of the world was perishing for the Gospel he would allow no man to narrow his field of labor. "I look upon all the world as my parish, thus far, I mean: that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the tidings of salvation. This is the work to which I know God has called me, and sure I am that His blessing attends."

He practiced the sentiments of these lines and enjoined them upon others: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, to all the persons you can, in all the places you can, as long as ever you can." "It signifies but little where we are," he would say, "so we are but fully employed for our good Master." Too many persons are controlled by their emotions, and walk by feeling rather than by faith. With Wesley it was always a question of duty and right motives, rather than exultant feeling. "*I see* abundantly more than *I feel*," he would say, And when he saw the path of duty, he invariably walked therein.

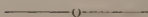
He did not seek positions of honor, and responsibility, but when they were thrust upon him he did not shirk his duty. When accused of exercising too much power in the government of the Methodist societies, he denied the charge, and added: "I did not seek any part of it. But when it was come unawares, not daring to bury that talent, I used it to the best of my judgment. Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now, bear it as my burden, the burden which God lays upon me; and, therefore, I dare not lay it down."

He was once asked by a lady, "Suppose that you knew you were to die at twelve o'clock to-morrow night, how would you spend the intervening time?" "How, madam?" he replied; "why just as I intend to spend it now, I should preach this night at Gloucester, and again at five to-morrow morning. After that I should ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the societies in the evening. I should then repair to friend Martin's house, who expects to entertain me, converse and pray with the family as usual, retire to my room at ten o'clock, commend myself to my heavenly Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in glory." Those who have studied the life of this faithful servant of God, and observed how carefully he planned all his work and how conscientiously he discharged every duty, will not be inclined to regard this answer as presumption or fanaticism.

Men of versatile gifts are often drawn away from the path of duty because their talents enable them to succeed in other fields of labor, but nothing could swerve Wesley from the strict path of duty. Fitchett says: "He could have discussed criticism with Pope, politics with Swift, literature with Dr. Johnson, or philosophy with Berkley, on equal terms—but for one circumstance. He had better things to do! Dr. Johnson, himself a glutton in talk, complained to Patty Wesley of her brother: 'I hate to meet

John Wesley,' he said. 'The dog enchants you with his conversation, and then breaks away to go and visit some old woman.' But for Wesley the old woman represented duty. She was an immortal spirit, as precious in the sight of God as Dr. Johnson himself. If Christ valued her enough to die for her then, as Wesley's conscience told him, he might well value her enough to sacrifice ease that he might go and comfort her."

His fidelity to duty is well described in these words: "Wesley never wearied, never faltered, never doubted, never turned aside. His comrades lagged behind him; his friends forsook him; a world of angry controversy eddied about his name and character. None of these things affected Wesley. The clear flame of his zeal burned long, burned undimmed, burned still, when even the fire of life turned to ashes."



REDEEMING THE TIME

The Master said: "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." There was so much to be done, and such a short time in which to do it! Not a minute must be lost.

In the use of time, Wesley imitated his Master. "Leisure and I have taken leave of one another," he says. "I propose to be busy as long as I live, if my health is so long indulged me." While waiting for his carriage he was heard to exclaim: "I have lost ten minutes, and they are lost forever." Again when tempted to linger before a beautiful landscape, he cried: "I believe there is an eternity, I must arise and go hence."

His "sayings" on the right use of time are well worth pondering; "Beware of the sins of omission." "Never be unemployed a moment; never be triflingly employed." "Do you not find

that *any* time is *no* time? I am afraid of delay." "It is impossible that an idle man can be a good man, sloth being inconsistent with religion." "Be it thy earnest care to improve the present hour. This is your own, and it is your all. The past is as nothing as though it had never been. The future is not yours, perhaps it never will be. Therefore, live today; lose not an hour."

For fifty years of his life, Wesley rose at four o'clock. By experiment, he found that for himself at least, six hours was sufficient time for sleep. This left eighteen hours to be devoted to his high calling. He was no blusterer, but a steady worker, "moving with almost the regularity of a planet." "You do not understand my manner of life" he says, "Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry, because I never undertake any more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit." He had learned the great secret of maintaining a spirit of devotion amidst the busy activities of life, so that his spiritual life did not suffer. He says: "When I was at Oxford, and lived almost like a hermit, I saw not how any busy man could be saved. I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain the Christian spirit amidst the noise and bustle of the busy world. God taught me better by my own experience. I have ten times more business than ever I had in my life, but it is no hindrance to silence of spirit."

He was a man of remarkable vitality and did not grow old with the calendar. Nor did he excuse himself from toil simply because he was an old man. Here is an account of a day's work when he was eighty-five years old: "He tells us he rode from Birmingham to Hotham in the morning and preached at nine o'clock to a large and serious congregation. At eleven he preached with much enlargement of heart in the new chapel at Market Wreighton, and imme-

diately afterwards at Pocklington, in a house that was like an oven, finally closing the day with a sermon at York in the evening." In his eighty-seventh year, one year before his death, he says: "I finished my sermon on the 'Wedding Garments,' perhaps the last that I shall write. My eyes are now waxed dim; my natural force is abated. However, while I can I would fain do a little for God before I drop into the dust."

During the sixty-five years of his ministry, it is estimated that he preached 42,000 times, published 300 books and pamphlets, and traveled 250,000 miles, or ten times the circumference of the globe, and mostly on horse-back. He began keeping his journal in October, 1735, and the last entry is dated October, 1790, "and between these two Octobers," says Augustine Birrell, "there lies the most amazing record of human exertion ever penned or endured."

Strong words indeed, but Fitchett seems to be of the same mind, for he says: "In range, speed, intensity and effectiveness, Wesley must always remain one of the greatest workers known to mankind. He seemed to live many lives in one, and each life was of amazing fulness. He preached more sermons, traveled more miles, published more books, wrote more letters, built more churches, waged more controversies, and influenced more lives than any other man in English history."

While Wesley was a prodigious worker, he did not believe in "burning the candle at both ends." In a letter he says: "Brother Jackson should advise Brother Ridel not to please the devil by preaching himself to death."



HIS TEACHING AND PRACTICE CONCERN- ING THE RIGHT USE OF MONEY

It would be no exaggeration to say that one will search in vain to find any person who has rendered a higher account of his stewardship of

time, talents and possessions than John Wesley. His "sayings" on the right use of money are well worth quoting, for they give the marrow of the Gospel on this important subject.

"Gain all you can; save all you can; give all you can."

"It is no more sinful to be rich than to be poor, but it is dangerous beyond expression."

"How can you, on principles of reason, spend your money in a way which God may *possibly* forgive instead of spending it in a manner which He will *certainly* reward?"

"Every pound you give to the poor is put into the bank of heaven, and it will bring a glorious interest; yea, and such as will be accumulating to all eternity."

"If you are not in pressing want, give something, and you will be no poorer for it. Grudge not, fear not; lend unto the Lord, and He will surely repay."

"If you earn but three shillings a week, give a penny out of it, and you will never want. But I do not say this to you who have ten or fifteen shillings a week, and give only a penny. I have been ashamed for you, if you have not been ashamed for yourself. Give in proportion to your substance. Open your eyes, your heart, your hand."

"Unless thou givest a full tenth of thy substance, of thy fixed and occasional income, thou dost undoubtedly set thy heart upon thy gold, and it will eat thy flesh as fire."

"If you have a family, seriously consider before God how much each member of it wants in order to have what is needful for life and godliness. This being done, fix your purpose to gain no more. As it comes daily or yearly, so let it go. 'But I must provide for my children.' Certainly. But how? By making them rich. Then you will probably make them heathens. Leave them enough to live on, not in idleness and luxury, but by honest industry."

He Practiced What He Preached

Now let us see how his example corresponds with his precepts on this subject. Once when accused of laying up treasure upon earth, he replied: "I have two silver teaspoons at London, and two at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present, and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread."

If all the Methodists in the world had the same regard for the poor that Wesley had, the starving millions would soon be fed. He says: "Many years ago, when I was at Oxford, on a cold winter's day, a young maid called upon me. I said: 'You seem to be half starved. Have you nothing to cover you but that thin linen gown?' She said, 'Sir, this is all I have.' I put my hand in my pocket; but found I had scarce any money left, having just paid away what I had. It immediately struck me: 'Will the Master say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant?' Thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold? O, justice! O, mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of this poor maid?' Everything about thee which cost more than Christian duty required thee to lay out is the blood of the poor."

A generous-hearted lady left him a legacy of a thousand pounds (about \$5,000.00), but in a short time it was all given away. He wrote his sister: "You do not consider money never stays with *me*; it would burn me if it did. I throw it out of my hands as soon as possible lest it should find a way into my heart; therefore you should have spoken to me in London before Miss Lewen's money flew away," etc.

His biographer says: "He lived with the utmost economy himself, and gave away the whole surplus of his income. When he had thirty pounds a year he lived on twenty-eight and gave away two. The next year receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight and gave away

thirty-two. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received one hundred and twenty pounds, still he lived on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor ninety-two."

He Knew the Value of Money

He taught that the talent of making money is not to be despised, but regarded as God-given, and used for His glory. He emphasized the good that money might do if properly used: "It may be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame. —yea a lifter-up from the gates of death."

Some wealthy men once told Wesley that he did not know the value of money. He apparently took no notice of them, and let them talk on. But later in the day, as he was preaching, he recalled their words, and said: "I have heard today, that I do not know the value of money. What! don't I know that twelve pence make a shilling, and twenty-one shillings a guinea? Don't I know that if given to God, it's worth heaven—through Christ? And don't I know that if hoarded and kept, it's worth damnation to the man who hoards it?"

To the precept, "Gain all you can," he added the qualification: "without injuring yourself or your neighbor either in soul or in body." He warned his people against the snares of wealth, urging them "to hold fast to their old-time simplicity, to count themselves as God's stewards, and to be as faithful in saving and giving as they were diligent in getting."

"The Methodists grow more and more self-indulgent because they *grow rich*," he said. Referring to those who had rapidly increased in wealth, he said: "And it is an observation which admits of few exceptions, that nine in ten of these decreased in grace in the same proportion as they increased in wealth."

The last entry in his personal Account Book was written about six months before his death,

and reads: "For upwards of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I save all I can, and give all I can, that is all I have."

His treasures were laid up in heaven. It is estimated that he gave away during his lifetime \$150,000.00 (an equivalent of \$500,000 to-day) derived principally from gifts and the proceeds from the sales of his books and pamphlets, and dying, left behind him, as some one has put it, "a good library of books, a wellworn clergyman's gown, a much-abused reputation, and—the Methodist Church."



A FISHER OF MEN

Wesley tells us that in his early manhood he met a "serious man," who said to him, "Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven. Remember you cannot serve Him alone. You must therefore find companions or make them. The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." These words greatly influenced Wesley's life. They sent him forth to win others to Christ, and also to provide for the social side of the religious life.

He possessed the evangelistic gift in a high degree, and was eminently successful in reaching the unsaved, both by preaching to great crowds and by dealing with the individual face to face. He considered the saving of souls his chief business, and we hear him say, "Church or no Church, we must attend to the work of saving souls." Sometimes he preached in the open air to great crowds of from 10,000 to 20,000 persons, and the power of the Holy Spirit was so wonderfully manifested that men and women often fell to the ground crying for mercy. Here is an account of such a scene:

"While I was preaching, God began to make

bare His arm, not in a close room, neither in private, but in the open air, and before more than two thousand witnesses. One, and another, and another were struck to the earth; exceedingly trembling at the presence of His power. Others cried, with a loud and bitter cry, 'what must we do to be saved?' In the evening, at St. Nicholas Street, I was interrupted, almost as soon as I had begun to speak, by the cries of one who strongly cried for pardon and peace. Others dropped down as dead. Thomas Maxfield began to roar out, and beat himself against the ground, so that six men could scarcely hold him. Many others began to cry out to the Saviour of all, insomuch that all the house, and indeed all the street for some space, was in an uproar. But we continued in prayer, and the greater part found rest to their souls."

Sowing by all Waters

He looked for conversions where others often regarded the conditions as forbidding. He did not despair of seeing the drunkard converted even while he was intoxicated. He handed an intoxicated man a tract, "A word to a drunkard," and describes the incident as follows:

"He looked at it, then at me, and said, 'A word—a word to a drunkard that is, sir, I am wrong; I know I am wrong. Pray let me talk a little with you.' He held me by the hand for a full half an hour, and I believe he got drunk no more. I beseech you, brethren, do not despise drunkards. 'Sinners of every sort,' said a venerable old clergyman, 'have I frequently known converted to God, but a habitual drunkard have I never known converted.' But I have known five hundred, perhaps five thousand."

Now let us pause for a moment, and let that picture impress itself indelibly upon our minds. There stands John Wesley, a graduate of the world's leading University and one of the foremost scholars of his day, with the best English

blood coursing through his veins,—gentleman, scholar, minister—there he stands holding for a half hour the hand of a drunkard and talking with him about the salvation of his soul.

On one occasion he was held up by a highwayman who demanded his money or his life. Under such circumstances the average person would have been so agitated and unnerved that he would have thought of nothing but how to escape with his life. But Wesley was so absorbed with his Master's business, and had such self-possession that, after giving up his money, he turned to the highwayman and said: "Let me speak one word to you; the time may come when you will regret the course of life in which you are now engaged. Remember this, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.'" No more was said, and they parted. Many years after as Wesley was going out of a church in which he had preached, a stranger introduced himself and asked Wesley if he recalled being waylaid at such a time. He told him he recollected it. "I was that man," said the stranger, "and that single verse you quoted on that occasion was the means of a total change in my life and habits. I have long since been in the practice of attending the house of God and giving attention to his word, and trust that I am a Christian."

A Knight of the Golden Pen

Wesley was a charming, as well as a prolific, letter writer, and he used this gift for the high purpose of calling men to God. His nephew, young Charles Wesley, was a prodigy in music, and a very bright young man, but he was not a Christian. Here is the way Wesley addressed him:

"Dear Charles,—It has been much upon my mind today that I am still indebted to you. There is a debt of love which I should have paid before now. But I must not delay it any

longer. I have long observed you with a curious eye; not as a musician, but as an immortal spirit that is come forth from God, the Father of spirits, and is returning to Him in a few moments. But have you well considered this? Methinks if you had, it would be ever uppermost in your thoughts. For what trifles in comparison of this, are all the shining baubles of the world!

“‘Wise is the man that labors to secure
The mighty, the important stake;
And by all methods strives to make
His passage safe, and his reception sure.’

“God has favored you with many advantages. You have health and strength and a thousand outward blessings. And why should you not have all the inward blessings which God has prepared for those that love Him?

“You are good-humored, mild and harmless. But *unless you are born again* you cannot see the Kingdom of God. But ask, and you shall receive; for it is nigh at hand!—I am, dear Charles, your affectionate uncle.”

This letter brought a gratifying response, and we wish we had space to give Wesley's second letter.

Those who use the pen for such high and holy purposes have been called, “Knights of the golden pen.” We need more of such knights among every-day Christians.

About every method that is used today to reach men was used by Wesley. He was not content simply to preach the Gospel to the poor and destitute, but like his Master, he cared also for their physical needs. To help the poor and the outcast in a great city he established the following agencies: a soup kitchen, a charity school, an orphanage, an employment agency, a medical dispensary, a poor man's bank—to lend money to the poor, and had workers visit the prisons regularly. To care for the sick and the afflicted, he divided London into twenty-three districts, and appointed forty-six visitors to visit the sick

three times a week, "relieving their wants, and inquiring concerning their souls." In all this work of relieving distress he followed his Master, putting the greatest emphasis upon the Bread of Life for the soul, and then ministering to their bodily needs.

We have noticed that the first services he performed after his conversion were in behalf of condemned felons. Now it is interesting to note that the last entry in his journal refers to a sermon he preached on "One thing is needful," and he adds, "I hope many, even then resolved to choose the better part." And, last of all, with his dying breath he gave orders that a sermon which he had preached on "The love of God to fallen man," should be scattered abroad and given to everybody. How well he lived up to his motto: "*I must and will save as many souls as I can while I live.*"



BROAD-MINDEDNESS AND BIG-HEARTED- NESS

The charge of bigotry can never be made against Methodism. "I desire to have a league offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Christ," declared Wesley. "Are you a soldier of Christ?"—that was the important thing, and not, "To what Church do you belong?"

"What is that we contend about?" he asks. "Brother, is thy heart with mine as my heart is with thine? If it be, give me thy hand. I am indeed a poor, foolish, sinful worm, and how long my Lord will use me I know not. But so long as I am continued in the work let us rise up together, let us strengthen one another's hands in God." That was the spirit of the founder of Methodism.

Now just suppose that all Christians of all creeds showed such an admirable spirit as this:

"I saw no cause to speak against *you* because you did against *me*. I wanted you to do more,

not less good; and therefore durst not do nor say anything to hinder it. Indeed, I trust that 'the bad blood is now taken away.' Let it return no more. Not content with not weakenings each other's hands or speaking against each other, directly or indirectly, let us defend each other's character to the uttermost against either ill or well-meaning evil speakers."

The motto of Methodism is true to Scripture: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, fraternity; in all things, charity."

Wesley followed what Paul called "The more excellent way," the way of love. His remarks on love are gems: "Let love not visit you as a transient guest, but be the constant temper of your soul. Let it pant in your heart, let it sparkle in your eyes; let it shine in all your actions, and let there be in your tongue the law of kindness." "Nothing humbles the soul so deeply as love; it makes us willing to be the least of all and the servant of all."

"I blame all when they speak the truth other than in love."

"An ounce of love is worth a pound of knowledge."

"It is easier to lose love than to find truth."

"O let this be deep engraven upon your heart: 'All is nothing without love!' 'Love is the queen of all graces; the highest perfection in earth or in heaven, the very image of the invisible God, as in men below, so in angels above.' 'For God is love,' and 'he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him.'"

The possession of this "queen of all graces" is the secret of his forbearance and his spirit of forgiveness.

"Henry Moore," he says, "you are a witness that what John Atlay said is untrue. He said: 'Mr. Wesley could never bear a man who contradicted him.' Now no man in England has contradicted me as much as you have done, and yet, Henry, I love you still. You are right."

His was a most generous heart, and what seems hardest for most Christians—to forgive enemies—seemed easiest to him. He knew how to take rebuke nobly also. He once wrote a severe criticism of a writer whom he considered guilty of heresy. One of Wesley's old friends, a Dublin Methodist, thought Wesley too severe, and wrote him to that effect. Wesley's reply shows a beautiful spirit. It is quoted from "Letters of John Wesley," by Eayrs:

"Dear Harry: Your letter gave me pleasure and pain. It gave me pleasure because it was written in a mild and loving spirit; but it gave me pain because I found I had pained you, whom I so tenderly love and esteem. But I shall do it no more. I sincerely thank you for your kind reproof. It is a precious balm, and will, I trust, in the hands of the Great Physician, be the means of healing my sickness. I am so sensible of your real friendship herein, that I cannot write without tears. The words you mention were too strong. They will no more fall from my mouth. I am, dear Harry, affectionately yours," etc.

But let no one think that Wesley was a weak sentimentalist, because he loved so generously and forgave so freely. Love does not denote weakness, but strength. His was far from that mandlin spirit that pampers criminals and overrides justice. One day two soldiers disturbed a congregation and were ordered by their commanding officer to be soundly whipped. Wesley remarked that "they richly deserved all they got."

HIS TRIUMPHANT DEATH

Many of the Wesleys bore remarkable testimonies to the grace of God in the hour of death, but it remained for John Wesley to bear the most triumphant testimony of them all. We have space for only a few of his most impressive words, uttered during his last hours: "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus." He

sang a verse of the hymn: "All Glory to God in the Sky, and Peace Upon Earth Be Restored," etc. He called for a pen but finding he could not write, some one said to him, "Tell me what to write." "Nothing," he said, "but that God is with us." He then sang a verse,

"I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,

Praise shall employ my nobler powers," etc.

A little later he repeated: "The clouds drop fatness." "The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." Then raising his hands like a triumphant soldier, he cried, "The best of all is, God is with us." Too weak to say more he falteringly repeated, "I'll praise . . . I'll praise." "Farewell," was the last word he uttered, while Joseph Bradford, praying uttered the words, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors."

Then those who stood around his bed broke into singing:

"Waiting to receive thy spirit,
Lo the Saviour stands above,
Shows the purchase of His merit,
Reaches out the crown of love."



WAS HE A "SCRIPTURAL CHRISTIAN?"

Wesley often spoke of an "almost Christian," a "Bible Christian," and a "Scriptural Christian." He was afraid of the "almost Christian;" he aspired to be a "Scriptural Christian." He once defined a Methodist as "one who lives according to the method laid down in the Bible." To his mind, a true Methodist and a Scriptural Christian were identical.

Suppose we test his life by the Sermon on the Mount Was he not humble, merciful, meek, pure in heart; did he not "hunger and thirst after righteousness?" To multitudes was he not "the salt of the earth," and "the light of the world?"

Did he not love his enemies and pray for those who spitefully used him? Did he not possess the "single eye," "lay up his treasures in heaven," and so fully commit himself to God that he was "anxious for nothing?" Did he not love the Lord with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself—and prove it by his conduct? Wherein did he fail to meet the requirements of a "Scriptural Christian?" He was human and had the infirmities of humanity. He made mistakes—mistakes which sometimes hindered the work of God, perhaps, but was not his will resolutely fixed upon one thing, to please God at all costs?

How was this spiritual stature which we so much admire attained? Was it "easy and natural" for him to be a great Christian, so that prayer, Bible-reading and the ordinary means of grace could be dispensed with? Let this resolution, found in his pocket diary which he always carried with him, answer the question: "I resolve to devote an hour morning and evening to private prayer; no pretence or excuse whatsoever." And that was not a New Year's resolution kept for six weeks—it was kept for fifty years. Two hours a day spent in prayer! As to the Bible, he called himself "a man of one Book."

No wonder he was a powerful preacher, he relied so fully upon the Divine power. "As to the qualifications of a Gospel minister," he says, "grace is necessary; learning is expedient. Grace and supernatural gifts are ninety-nine parts in a hundred. Acquired learning may then have its place." And it was reliance upon Divine power that made him a great Christian.

When Bishop Asbury learned of Wesley's death, he recorded in his Journal what Dr. J. M. Buckley has called "probably the best estimate of his character and career." Referring to him as "that dear man of God," he said: "When we consider his plain and nervous writings, his uncommon talent for sermonizing and journalizing; that he had such a steady flow of animal spirits; so much

of the spirit of government in him; his knowledge as an observer; his attainments as a scholar; his experience as a Christian; I conclude his equal is not to be found among all the sons he hath brought up, nor his superior among all the sons of Adam he may have left behind."

WESLEY'S MESSAGE TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Dr. Francis G. Peabody, of Harvard University, contributed an article to *The Methodist Quarterly Review* not long ago entitled, "The Theologian in a New World." The opening words are such as we hear on every hand today: "The unprecedented and bewildering conditions of the world since the war," etc. What a different world is this from Wesley's world of the eighteenth century! "How absurd to go back to Wesley to find help for the solution of our religious problems," does some one say? Follow Dr. Peabody's article. He suggests the "marks of a theology that can interpret a new world." He names three, "simplicity, unity and spirituality." Now if he had been asked to name three prominent marks of Methodism, he could not have done better than name these three characteristics.

By "simplicity" he tells us that he means "singleness, directness, straightforwardness—the single-heartedness which is toward Christ." Wesley will certainly stand this test. He was the very essence of simplicity. It was the simple gospel of present salvation for all who would repent and believe in Jesus Christ that he preached. He preached the fundamentals, and with such simplicity of words that the illiterate colliers of Kingswood understood, believed, and were saved. And he it remembered that it was a dark age. Infidelity, vice and corruption abounded everywhere. The conditions might have been described as "unprecedented and bewildering." But historians tell us that the Methodist revival had such

effect upon the masses of the people that England was saved from a revolution such as France suffered.

As to the second mark, "unity," or "unification," as he calls it, we have only to quote Wesley's memorable words: "I desire to have a league offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Christ." Methodism has always stood ready to join with every true disciple of the Lord in the conquest of the world for Christ.

"Spirituality," is the third characteristic named. Social obligations must not be neglected, but the matter of prime importance is the spiritual life. "The world is crying for a living God," says Dr. Peabody, and the Church must make God known to the world as an ever-living Saviour dwelling in the hearts of believers and inspiring them to noble lives. Here again Methodism meets the need. From the day John Wesley received the witness of the Spirit, the emphasis has ever been upon experimental religion. We have learned the secret of his own remarkable career: "A deep intimacy with God." Dr. Peabody says: "What the world just now has most to fear is not that God should be misinterpreted, but that God may be forgotten." No danger here for those who follow Wesley and his theology, for, if any man ever lived conscious of the divine presence at all times, John Wesley was that man. He saw "the hand of God on every person and thing," he tells us, "over-ruling all as it seemeth Him good." "Walk as knowing God besets you on every side," is the admonition he gives.

As a Church we have all the theology—all the doctrinal teaching necessary to save a world, though the conditions be "unprecedented and bewildering." If the millions of "people called Methodists" would serve their Lord and Master as faithfully as did the founder of Methodism, the new era of spiritual conquest for which we pray would soon be ushered in.

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